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Though Contemporary Public Management Dilemmas

A Report On Reporting: Why Peers Report Integrity and Law Violations in Public Organizations

The 2004–2005 archives of three bureaus of integrity are analyzed in order to study the reasons for reporting integrity and law violations within public organizations. Peer reporting accounts for only a small percentage of cases; most investigations originate from routine and continuous institutional controls. What are the reasons peers choose to report or not report? A sense of justice is most important, followed by self-protection and protection of the wrongdoer. The most important reason for or against coming forward is the reporter's fear of negative consequences. One surprising rationale for not reporting is that an individual feels responsible for the wrongdoer's punishment. Six propositions are elicited from this research as well as specific pragmatic recommendations for management procedures to improve reporting of integrity and/or law violations.

We structure our research around two questions. The first is, *how do investigations of integrity violations within public organizations get started?* ... [S]econd, ... *what are the reasons for reporting integrity violations in public organizations?*

integrity violation is discovered, the sooner action can be taken to minimize damage. Newspapers occasionally report a governmental integrity violation. Sometimes it is clear how the violation was discovered, often not. In this study we ask, who reports integrity violations in public organizations, what are the violations, and why? The aim is to formulate advice on integrity management for public organizations to facilitate "good" reporting of integrity violations.

We structure our research around two questions. The first is, *how do investigations of integrity violations within public organizations get started?* In other words, who first reports the violations? Literature on this question is sparse. Nelen (2003) and Huberts et al. (2004) have reported that in the Netherlands, cases are initiated by citizens, coworkers, and supervisors in fairly equal shares. They also

warn that their figures are tentative and may or may not differ according to the type of violation. The second research question is, *what are the reasons for reporting integrity violations in public organizations?* According to Treviño and Victor, "Co-workers who are willing to monitor their peers' behavior and report violations to management represent a potentially important supplemental control resource for organizations" (1992, 38).

New data will be presented on this article's two research questions. First, we discuss the theoretical background of the study and define its key concepts. We then propose typologies of integrity violations (the "what" in "who reports what") and reporters (the "who" in "who reports what"). We follow with a general discussion of the literature on whistle-blowing with respect to the reasons potential peer reporters have to report. We then describe the study background and methodology: where and how the data

The importance of attending to integrity violations in public administration is evident. Integrity violations harm trust in government (cf. Nieuwenburg 2007) and lead to substantial financial losses and organizational problems (Ouchi 1979; Eisenhardt 1989a). We note here that integrity violations can be, but are not necessarily, legal violations, and that "unethical" and "illegal" are different. When we refer to "integrity violations" in the remainder of this article, they are to be understood as "violations of integrity and/or the law."

In a study of corruption (De Graaf and Huberts 2008), the peers of corrupt officials often had suspicions—sometimes even evidence—that something was wrong long before the investigation, but kept the information to themselves. The study describes the process of becoming corrupt as a "slippery slope," and in some cases, even the corrupt official wished he had reported earlier so that he could have been stopped when the case was relatively minor. The sooner the

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were collected, the explorative design, the study of the archives of three public organizations, and the reporter interviews. In the following three sections, we present the findings on the two research questions, list propositions elicited from the research, and discuss them in the context of current literature. We conclude with implications and recommendations for public integrity management.

Theoretical Background

Some Key Concepts of the Study Defined

A *reporter* is defined here as one who discloses information about a perceived integrity violation to someone who has the ability to effect action (cf. Near and Miceli 1985, 4). The reporter has no authority over the accused and thus lacks the power to directly rectify and punish. The reporting of integrity violations includes at least three parties, each of which takes action in response to the other (cf. Åkerstrom 1991, 16; Near and Miceli 1996, 508): the reporter, the wrongdoer, and the information receiver. The reporter takes three steps: *observing* an act (a broad category—hearing, for example, can be included), *defining* the act as an integrity violation, and *reporting* the act (cf. Near and Miceli 1996, 508).

Integrity is defined broadly as the quality of acting in accordance with relevant moral values, norms, and rules. In the public context, integrity “can be thought of as individuals upholding the obligation of office by implementing public programs in accordance with laws and rules, as well as in support of the public intent or the collective trust” (Blijswijk et al. 2004, 719). The focus here, however, is on integrity *violations*: behavior that violates relevant moral and/or legal values, rules, and norms. Note that many integrity violations are also legal violations, but not necessarily so. Unethical and illegal are not one and the same. In this article, we therefore use the term “integrity violations” as shorthand for “violations of integrity and/or the law.”

Typology of Wrongdoing

Categorizing the “what” in “who reports what” is a necessary step in researching how investigations get started in the first place. The type of wrongdoing has previously been related to whistle-blowing (e.g. Near et al. 2004), but mostly in the context of whether the type of wrongdoing affects the whistle-blowing process rather than where reports come from or how they surface. Near et al. (2004) conclude, based on a survey of a large U.S. military base, that employees who observe perceived wrongdoing involving mismanagement, sexual harassment, or unspecified legal violations are significantly more likely to report than those who observe stealing, waste, safety problems, or discrimination. The authors also conclude that the type of wrongdoing makes a difference in the whistle-blowing process and should be examined further in the future. (For a similar study within American police agencies, see Rothwell and Baldwin 2007).

This study employs a typology of integrity violations derived from an analysis of the literature on integrity and corruption by Huberts, Pijl, and Steen (1999).¹ The types of integrity violations are considered universal and thus useful for describing unethical behavior in almost all (public) organizational contexts. Lasthuizen (2008) recently succeeded in a first validation of the typology.

The types of integrity violations [used in this study] are considered universal and thus useful for describing unethical behavior in almost all (public) organizational contexts.

Table 1 Types of Integrity and/or Law Violations

1. <i>Corruption: Bribing</i>
Misuse of public power for private gain; asking, offering, or accepting bribes
2. <i>Corruption: Nepotism, cronyism, and patronage</i>
Misuse of public authority to favor friends, family, or party
3. <i>Fraud and theft</i>
Improper private gain acquired from the organization (with no involvement of external actors)
4. <i>Conflict of (private and public) interest</i>
Personal interests (through assets, jobs, gifts, etc.) that interfere with public interests
5. <i>Improper use of authority (for noble causes)</i>
Use of illegal or improper methods to achieve organizational goals (e.g., illegal methods of investigation or disproportionate violence by police)
6. <i>Misuse and manipulation of information</i>
Lying, cheating, manipulating information, or breaching confidentiality
7. <i>Discrimination and sexual harassment</i>
Misbehavior toward colleagues or citizens and customers
8. <i>Waste and abuse of resources</i>
Failure to comply with organizational standards, improper performance, incorrect or dysfunctional internal behavior
9. <i>Private time misconduct</i>
Conduct in an employee's private time that harms the public's trust in administration or government

Typology of Reporters

To determine how investigations get started in the first place, a useful classification of reporters is needed. According to the literature (e.g., Åkerstrom 1991; King and Hermodson 2000; Miceli, Near, and Dworkin 2008; Near and Miceli 1996; Rothschild and Miethe 1999; Treviño and Victor 1992; Zipparo 1999), the reporter–wrongdoer relationship and whether the reporter has a prior interest in the case are important factors. Thus, reporters can be distinguished along three dimensions: (1) whether the reporter is internal (reporting from within government) or external (reporting from outside government), (2) whether the reporter has an interest in the case, and (3) whether the reporter and the alleged wrongdoer have a work relationship (relevant only when the reporter is inside the government).

Table 2 Logical Classification of Reporters

Reporter	Case-Disinterested		Case-Interested	
	Not coworker	Coworker	Not coworker	Coworker
Inside government	1	4	2	3
Outside government	6	n.a.	5	n.a.

Reporting in the Literature

The second research question focuses on the reasons for reporting integrity violations—the “why” question—which we can begin to answer by reviewing the literature. We will see that the reasons to report are straightforward in all categories of reporters save one: peer reporting.

The literature, while vast, is primarily centered on whistle-blowing. Several enlightening reviews (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran 2005; Maesschalck and Ornelis 2003; Miceli,

1 Near, and Dworkin 2008; Near and Miceli 1996; Vandekerckhove
2 2006) summarize the (mainly) quantitative studies on whistle-
3 blowers and whistle-blowing. Their emphasis is on the personal
4 characteristics of the whistle-blower, and on predicting and finding
5 the determinants of organizations at high risk of whistle-blowing
6 (Vandekerckhove 2006, 13). Many factors are associated with the
7 likelihood of whistle-blowing, internal and external. They mostly
8 correlate with aspects of various levels of the reporting process,
9 including the reporter's personal characteristics (gender, self-esteem,
10 personality traits, religion) and situational aspects (type of alleged
11 wrongdoing, quality of supervision, status of the recipient, organiza-
12 tional integrity policy, and so on).

13
14 Several scholars have stated that peer reporting can be considered
15 a type of whistle-blowing behavior (e.g., Treviño and Victor 1992;
16 Victor, Treviño, and Shapiro 1993). However, knowing which
17 conclusions to adopt from the general whistle-blowing literature
18 when looking for the reasons for peer reporting in the public sector is
19 difficult. The studies on whistle-blowing tell us much about common
20 characteristics and organizations but, because they are mainly quanti-
21 tative, say little about the *process* of deciding to report.² Maesschalck
22 and Ornelis (2003, 539) note that for insights into the deeper mecha-
23 nisms of whistle-blowing, survey research will not do and qualitative
24 research is necessary. Since then, interesting qualitative studies have
25 been conducted, putting public whistle-blowing in (a public) context,
26 such as a study by Johnson (2003) concentrating on external whistle-
27 blowers, and a study by O'Leary (2006) on government guerrillas,
28 who sometimes become whistle-blowers (but most do not).

29
30 Furthermore, many studies on whistle-blowing in the last two
31 decades have concentrated on private sector organizations. Does this
32 compare to public sector feelings and actions concerning reporting?
33 There is strong evidence that it does not: Brewer and Selden (1998)
34 conclude that federal whistle-blowers act in ways that are consistent
35 with the theory of public service motivation (see, e.g., Houston
36 2006; Lewis and Frank 2002; Perry and Wise 1990). Miceli, Near,
37 and Dworkin say, "Recent research suggested that there may be
38 effects of industry in whistleblowing—specifically, for example, that
39 whistleblowers cluster in public rather than private or not-for-profit
40 sectors" (2008, 85).

41
42 A third difficulty in adopting general conclusions from the whistle-
43 blowing literature is that nearly every study's definition of whistle-
44 blowing is different (cf. Chiu 2003; Jubb 1999; Vandekerckhove
45 2006). Are the behaviors comparable, or do they simply share the
46 same name? Based on Jubb (1999) and Vandekerckhove (2006, 22),
47 we can distinguish seven elements of whistle-blowing with ambigu-
48 ous definitions: act, actor, outcome, motive, subject, target, and
49 recipient. Unlike the whistle-blowing literature, in which cases often
50 are reported by the media, more than 99 percent of the reports in
51 the studied archives were *internal*. Although both internal and
52 external reporting are part of its definition, "whistle-blowing"
53 implies a lot of noise, and thus is indicative of *external* reporting
54 (cf. Chiasson, Johnson, and Byington 1995; Johnson 2003).
55 Can the reasons for reporting a colleague to the media be
56 the same as reporting a colleague to the boss?

57
58 Another important aspect is the report target: "whistleblowing
59 literature has focused primarily on reporting the wrongdoing of

superiors rather than the wrongdoing of peers" (Victor, Treviño,
and Shapiro 1993, 253). Much whistle-blowing literature is about
organizational wrongdoing, with management as the responsible
party. In the development of California's Bay Area Rapid Transit
system (Anderson et al. 1980), for example, the whistle-blowers
faced a loyalty conflict between the public interest and their organi-
zation (Vandekerckhove 2006, 9). Based on the wider sociological
literature, however, we can hypothesize that going outside one's
group (as in peer reporting) is a different kind of loyalty conflict:
peer reporters have to balance their loyalty to a sense of justice (the
organization) against their loyalty to the group in general and the
wrongdoer in particular. As Pershing states, "Deciding how to react
to occupational misconduct may be conceptualized as choosing
between two conflicting loyalties: to the institution of which one
is a member and to organizational peers" (2003, 150). Further-
more, peers in public organizations wrestle with the government
code of being loyal to the highest moral principle (Johnson 2003,
27). Loyalty to immediate colleagues—the group—is often much
stronger than loyalty to the organization (e.g., Heck 1992). The
victim of betrayal may suffer, but the betrayer does, too: "Associa-
tions of guilt or shame can linger on long after the act took place"
(Åkerstrom 1991, 19).

From the few studies that exist on peer reporting, it is clear that a
serious decision has to be made, one that differs starkly from many
other types of reporting. This becomes clear by the value- and
emotion-laden vernacular of peer reporting: "snitching" (Pershing
2003), "tattling," and "ratting out." Nor is the term "informer"
neutral: it is loaded with negative associations (Åkerstrom 1991).
Whether peer reporters are labeled as heroes or traitors, cowardly or
courageous, depends on the context and point of view. It is the result
of a process of social construction that varies with time and place.

Research Background and Methodology

Settings

To study how integrity investigations get started in government and
why they are reported, we studied the 2004 and 2005 archives of
three bureaus: the Amsterdam police department's Bureau of Inter-
nal Affairs (BIO),³ the city of Amsterdam's Bureau of Integrity (BI),
and the National Agency of Correctional Institutions within the
Ministry of Justice's Bureau of Integrity and Safety (BIS). Together,
the BIO and BI are the integrity agencies for all the civil servants
of the city of Amsterdam; the BIS represents a national ministry
serving institutions nationwide. Collectively, these three bureaus
represent a broad range of types of public employees, from the high-
est officials to street-level bureaucrats.

The three organizations are required by law to have whistle-blowing
regulations that include protections from retaliation for whistle-
blowers. These regulations exist in all three organizations, but
recent research shows that most civil servants in the Netherlands do
not know about them (USBO 2008). Furthermore, it was found
that the current regulations for Dutch public officials hardly offer
whistle-blowers any protection (USBO 2008). In the three organiza-
tions, it is possible to report anonymously at a central point in the
organization. Reporters can also ask to report confidentially. Howev-
er, once a case turns out to involve unlawful conduct, confidentiality
cannot be guaranteed. None of the organizations has a public record
of fair treatment of whistle-blowers. Of the three organizations, the

BIO in particular has clearly articulated and reinforced statements of behavioral misconduct.

We obtained permission from each organization's administration and agreed that no traceable details of any case would become public. The researcher spent 11 days investigating the archives of the Amsterdam police (171 and 168 cases in 2004 and 2005, respectively), 6 days studying the archives of the city of Amsterdam (78 and 140 cases), and 7 days studying the archives of the correctional institutions (104 and 128 cases).

The cases researched were the known cases within the respective organizations. This is clearly different from *all* integrity violations that actually took place, undoubtedly a much greater number. For the purpose of this study, however, it was most important that the cases be characteristic of those discovered and investigated in the Netherlands.

Indexing the Archives

The cases were studied to distinguish (1) the reporter, (2) the type of violation, (3) the reason(s) for reporting, and (4) consequences for the reporter. The information on the reporters differed strongly among bureaus and cases, with one exception: most information was about the wrongdoer and the (perceived) integrity violation, not the reporter. In most cases, however, it was possible to trace the origin of the investigation. Files comprising only a page or so were generally cases that had been dismissed. Others contained of yards of folders. The police files turned out to have the most—as well as the most interesting—information because police investigators have more power than investigators of other bureaus. Much valuable information was collected from filed interviews with reporters.

Documents and Interviews

The intensity of the peer reporting experience is not just a matter of personality or individual perception. It depends in large part on context (Åkerstrom 1991, 19), and research methodologies must therefore take context into account. Therefore, we employed qualitative and explorative research so that every option, insight, and novel finding based on any variable mentioned in the whistle-blowing literature was open for inspection.

The indexed archives were first studied to determine the reasons for peer reporting. We studied each case in its own nuanced context. Victor, Treviño, and Shapiro comment on the importance of actuality: "Little previous research has been conducted on peer reporting of unethical behavior in organizations and no previous study has measured actual peer reporting behavior" (1993, 259–60). We kept special notes on every case that was labeled "peer reporting." Archived reporter interviews gave especially useful information on the process of peer reporting, but, as previously mentioned, most archived information was about the wrongdoer and wrongdoing—that is, evidence of an integrity violation. Therefore, we decided to conduct our own interviews where possible.

To select the cases, first all cases that were labeled "peer reporting" were considered. Then we eliminated some reporters because of restrictions, the most important of which was that the file was still active. In the end, 27 requests for interviews were made and 25 were accepted, a more than adequate number: "[W]hile there is no ideal

number of cases, a number between 4 and 10 cases usually works well" (Eisenhardt 1989b, 545).

The opportunity to so select the cases resulted in unique research material. It allowed us to avoid some pitfalls mentioned in the few whistle-blowing studies that have interviewed reporters. Rothschild and Miethe note,

Various approaches to the study of whistleblowers have been taken. Previous researchers have identified a small number of high-profile whistleblowers from media sources and performed case studies (Glazer and Glazer 1989). Others (Jos, Thompkins, and Hays 1989) have derived samples of whistleblowers from support agencies (e.g., Government Accountability Project), and still others have drawn a sample from a single occupation. Unfortunately, however, these strategies are limited because they tend to yield atypical samples (e.g., high-profile cases). (1999, 108–9)

The main interview questions were about the reasons (not) to report. The process was then evaluated by the interviewee. Extensive notes were taken during each interview (no audio or videotape was used). About half of the interviews took place in the organization of the reporter. The other interviews took place at the workplace (university) of the interviewer. The interviews, which lasted one hour on average, were often emotionally intense. In most cases, the reporters had thought long and hard before acting, meaning that the process of deciding to report and its arguments were vividly remembered by the interviewees. This differs significantly from Johnson's description of external whistle-blowers, who felt that certain factors so outweighed others there was "no deciding" (2003, 48). Our interviewees mentioned losing sleep before and after the ordeal.

To study the reasons *not* to report, we first planned to interview silent observers. Unfortunately, their names could not be elicited from the archives, and thus we stumbled on a study limitation. Those who were suspected of being silent observers denied knowing about the violation. Two-thirds of the reporters who were interviewed deliberated extensively before acting (more on this later), meaning that they also vividly remembered the reasons they had *not* to report. It is likely that they are the same reasons that the silent observers chose not to report. Many interviewees confirmed this, stating they suspected that their own doubts about reporting were similar to silent observers' reasons to not report. Yet no conclusions about nonreporters are drawn here.

Across-Case Analysis

After the within-case analyses (in this explorative study, first the nuances and context of every case were considered), it was necessary to look for patterns across cases. According to Eisenhardt (1989b), the advantage of this design is that it allows the researcher to recognize general patterns in different settings and to generate theory in the form of propositions. The disadvantage of this design is that every case, with its own context and contingencies, has to be reduced to a more abstract level to enable across-case comparisons (Dyer and Wilkins 1991), and we wanted to generate theory in the form of propositions. To find across-case patterns, Eisenhardt suggests techniques that force investigators to go beyond initial impressions: "Overall, the idea behind these cross-case searching

tactics is to force investigators to go beyond initial impressions, especially through the use of structured and diverse lenses on the data” (1989b, 541).

Given our research strategy, we faced an immense quantity of data. We followed Miles and Huberman’s (1994) suggestion to use a monster grid. On one axis of the grid are the 25 reporters; on the other are categories such as “mentioned reasons to report” and “mentioned reasons not to report.” The cells of the grid are not filled with numbers, but with verbal comments and citations (Swanborn 2003, 16). We derived patterns in the form of propositions from the grid, which were then juxtaposed with the empirical data. This inductive process was repeated many times before the impressions were written down.

Cross-Cultural Generalizability of the Study

All of the data in this study come from the Netherlands, which raises the question of generalizability to other countries. In their review article on whistle-blowing, Near and Miceli state, “We limit our discussion to whistleblowing in the context of U.S. society. Very little has been published on this topic outside North America and Great Britain ... Thus research is needed to examine whistle-blowing ... in different countries” (1996, 508). Progress indeed has been made since that report in 1996. Recently, Miceli, Near, and Dworkin (2008, 72) presented a list of 15 countries in which whistle-blowing had been noted.

A few comparative studies have also been conducted. Keenan (2002), for example, conducted a survey among American and Indian managers on perception variables on whistle-blowing, and compared Chinese and American managers on whistle-blowing (Keenan 2007). Sims and Keenan (1999) compared U.S. and Jamaican managers. Brody, Goulter, and Mihalek (1998) concluded that there are large differences in ethical perceptions of American and Japanese students when it comes to whistle-blowing. Miceli, Near, and Dworkin (2008, 88–89) discussed work by Rehg and Parkhe (2002), in which theoretical predictions about possible interactions among organizational culture and societal culture are discussed, based on differing power differences. Furthermore, India, Israel, Russia, and the United States have been compared on (external) whistle-blowing on a country level (Johnson 2004). In sum, cultural context is indeed important. Miceli, Near, and Dworkin note,

It is easy to imagine how country or culture characteristics could affect whether an observer believes she or he has witnessed wrongdoing, and whether anyone has the responsibility for reporting. Unfortunately, due to the paucity of research, it is too early to develop a taxonomy of country or cultural influences on the observation of wrongdoing. (2008, 72)

The propositions coming out of our Dutch data will be compared with the relevant international literature. To what precise extent, however, a Dutch study of integrity violations in public organizations can be compared to,

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Who Reports What
How the Ball Gets Rolling

The logical typology of table 2 was crossed with the empirical material from the archives, resulting in the following specifications of the six categories:

1. Cases stemming from ongoing investigations (BIO); regular controls, accountant or police investigations (BI); or police investigations, security agencies, etc. (BIS)
2. Cases starting after something was stolen in the organization without a clear suspect (therefore no clear reporter–wrongdoer relationship)
3. Cases stemming from a report by an administrator who was the (alleged) victim of the integrity violation
4. Cases stemming from peer reporting
5. Cases stemming from reports by citizens, customers, companies, or prisoners who had an interest in the case
6. Cases stemming from reports by citizens, customers, companies, or prisoners who had no interest in the case

Table 3 lists the rounded percentages of occurrence. The unknown category comprises primarily cases in which the researcher could not firmly establish who made the initial report.

Table 3 Where the Reports Come from in the Three Organizations

	Category description	Percent
1	Information from regular controls, accountants, police	35–39
2	Theft	5–12
3	Peer reporting with the reporter as victim	6–12
4	Peer reporting	9
5	Citizens, customers, companies, or prisoners who had an interest in the case	15–29
6	Citizens, customers, companies, or prisoners with no interest in the case	3–5
	Unknown	8–14

First of all, it is notable that the impressions from Nelen (2003) and Huberts et al. (2004)—that violations are reported by citizens, coworkers, and supervisors in fairly equal numbers—were wrong. Nelen and Huberts et al. rightfully warned that their figures were tentative, based on impressions rather than thorough research, and may differ according to type of violation. As Nelen and Huberts et al. argue, the veracity of the official figures on which they based their impressions was unclear. For example, a peer report is made to a supervisor; the supervisor decides to investigate. Often, in official figures, the supervisor becomes the reporter, not the peer. Nor do official statistics clearly distinguish between peers, supervisors, accountants, and so on; they are all (in official statistics) called colleagues.

The largest category included cases stemming from institutional controls within public organizations (35 percent to 39 percent), followed

1 by citizens who were (perceived) victims of an action by one or more
2 public administrators (15 percent to 29 percent). In many cases of
3 peer reporting (6 percent to 12 percent), the reporter was a (per-
4 ceived) victim of the wrongdoer (e.g., sexual harassment and violence
5 among colleagues). Peers (who were not victims) reporting on other
6 peers was a tiny category, only 9 percent. Therefore, we can conclude
7 that the earlier impression—that most internal integrity investiga-
8 tions in public organizations stem from internal whistle-blowers—is
9 wrong.

10
11 Anonymous reports from the collective archives could be counted
12 on one hand. The few that existed came from both administrators
13 and civilians.

14 **Types of Violations**

15 Category 1 represents all integrity violations broken down by organ-
16 ization. The city of Amsterdam mostly concerned “fraud and theft”
17 (46 percent). This category at correctional institutions was one-
18 third of that (13 percent), having “private time misconduct” as its
19 leader (33 percent). The latter mostly involved improper (typically
20 amorous) relationships with prisoners. “Misuse and manipulation of
21 information”—usually involving police information leaks—domi-
22 nated violations in the Amsterdam police force (45 percent), with
23 “private time misconduct” in second place at 23 percent.

24
25 Category 2 (theft without a suspect) was normally populated by
26 theft within the organization, occurrences apparently common to
27 all organizations. Although usually reported by peers, we must note
28 that reporting an unidentified suspect entails a completely different
29 decision-making process (emotionally and otherwise) from report-
30 ing a colleague.

31
32 Category 3 (employees who were also perceived victims of an in-
33 tegrity violation) comprised “discrimination and sexual harassment”
34 cases, including cases of violence.

35
36 In peer reporting (category 4), all types of integrity violations were
37 involved in all organizations, but they were not evenly spread out.
38 The city of Amsterdam had two clear leaders, “fraud and theft” (30
39 percent) and “waste and abuse of resources” (26 percent). The most
40 common violation reported in the Amsterdam police force was
41 “misuse and manipulation of information” (31 percent). The most
42 common types of peer reporting at correctional institutions involved
43 “discrimination and sexual harassment” and “improper use of author-
44 ity” (25 percent each).

45
46 The reporters in categories 5 and 6 were citizens and companies,
47 usually government “clients.” Cases reported by those with some-
48 thing at stake were more numerous than those reported by dis-
49 interested parties. They represented all possible types of integrity
50 violations although in the city of Amsterdam the reporters were
51 most often (perceived) victims of “corruption” and “fraud and theft”
52 (46 percent together). The police reports evidenced mainly cases
53 of unnecessary violence (30 percent) and misuse and manipula-
54 tion of information (34 percent). At the correctional institutions,
55 most reports by inmates were equally spread among (1) suspicion of
56 corruption (smuggling cell phones, marijuana, etc.), (2) improper
57 violence against inmates, and (3) improper contact with inmates
58 (usually by female guards).

59 **The Reasons for Reporting**

60 **Reasons for Reporting in All Categories**

61 Of all the categories in the previous section, the reasons for report-
62 ing became immediately clear, except when (nonvictim) peers
63 reported. Public administrators reported because of a specific duty
64 to do so (category 1); the reports were role-prescribed disclosures.
65 Often, as with accountants, the report was an explicit part of a
66 professional standard of the reporter (Davis 2002). This can also be
67 labeled “institutionalized particular organizational reporting.” Usu-
68 ally the reporter and the wrongdoer in these cases were colleagues
69 in the sense that they worked in the same organization but not in
70 the same area; there was no direct work relationship. How well they
71 knew each other depended on the organization and case contingen-
72 cies. It became clear that the incentives for reporters in category 1
73 were very strong and that reasons not to report were few or none.

74
75 The reasons for reporting theft (category 2) were clear: something
76 was noted to be stolen, reported, and documented. The reporter
77 rarely knew whether the wrongdoer was a colleague or cleaning staff.
78 The thief was almost never found.

79
80 Reasons for reporting when the reporter was the (perceived) victim
81 of the integrity violation (category 3) were straightforward: the
82 reporter wanted the violation stopped and the wrongdoer punished.
83 From the archives, it became clear that this did not mean the reports
84 were easy to make (cf. Knapp et al. 1997). On the contrary, victims
85 of integrity violations by colleagues have to overcome a high barrier
86 to report, which we expand on later.

87
88 The reasons for reporting in the peer-reporting category (4) were
89 vague. Little information was found in the files. (We expand on this
90 point later as well.)

91
92 Reasons to report in category 5 had to do with the reporter’s stake
93 in the case: the reporter wanted an unjust, unacceptable, or harmful
94 situation corrected. The few cases in which citizen reporters had no
95 stake, category 6, are beyond the purview of this article and will
96 not be studied in depth. We know from the literature (e.g., Gorta
97 and Forell 1995) that citizens are hesitant to report suspicions of
98 governmental fraud and corruption. In general, citizens are hesitant
99 to report white-collar crime and crime with no direct victims, which
100 is usually the case in governmental integrity violations when the
101 reporter is not the victim. Skogan (1984) draws similar conclusions
102 in a review article on citizen reporting determinants.

103 **Peer Reporting**

104
105 Because the reasons to report in the peer-reporting category were
106 not immediately clear, we conducted interviews. Except where
107 mentioned, the interviews did not reveal organizational patterns.
108 At the beginning of each section describing the research findings on
109 reasons for peers to report, we present the proposition that ema-
110 nated from the material. We then discuss study data leading to the
111 proposition. Finally, we juxtapose the propositions with the existing
112 knowledge on whistle-blowing. Where possible, we discuss case
113 details to illustrate the findings. Anonymity requirements prevent
114 in-depth case story presentations.

115
116 **Proposition 1.** *The strongest reason to peer report in the public context*
117 *is a sense of justice.* The integrity violation was perceived as worthy of
118

1 action. In other words, the reporters witnessing the violation found
2 it so morally compelling that they had to tell somebody.
3
4 “As long as I didn’t report—it took me several days—I knew I
5 wouldn’t be able to sleep.”
6
7 “You have to draw a line. This was clearly unnecessary vio-
8 lence, so I had to report it.”
9
10 “Integrity is number one for me. I don’t want bad apples in
11 our organization.”
12
13 “For me it wasn’t a tough decision. If I find that something
14 isn’t right, I report it.”
15
16 “If you know about something and don’t report, you tacitly
17 cooperate.”
18
19 “I have a strong sense of justice, that’s in my character.”
20
21 “I would have regretted it immensely if I hadn’t reported.
22 What he did was clearly wrong, so he had to be punished.”
23
24 “We correct inmates if they show wrong behavior. If you don’t
25 do the same as a guard, you’re lowering yourself.”
26
27 In short, a sense of justice compelled the reporter to report. What
28 Pershing (2003, 150) calls loyalty to the institution—one of two
29 conflicting loyalties—can now be called loyalty to a sense of justice.
30 In moral philosophical terms, the integrity or moral self-image
31 needs to be protected (cf. Musschenga 2004), which induces a
32 person to act. A “sense of justice” was never worded as “sense of ob-
33 ligation” to the public. No one explicitly referred to a public service
34 ethic (cf. Brewer and Selden 1998).
35
36 A sense of justice as a reason for reporting is closely connected to
37 the gravity of the integrity violation. “It depends on the serious-
38 ness of the violation. It has to be grave enough for me to report it.”
39 Reporters often mentioned that they had witnessed small integrity
40 violations but did not report them. In cases with more than one
41 witness to a violation, we asked the reporter why the other(s) had
42 not reported. An often-mentioned reason was that the colleague
43 apparently did not find the violation serious enough. Based on this,
44 we can hypothesize that one difference between a reporter and silent
45 observer may lie in the perception of the violation’s seriousness.
46 This, too, is a difference in sense of justice.
47
48 Some support for proposition 1 can be found in the wider whistle-
49 blowing literature; several scholars looked at the moral judgment and
50 values of whistle-blowers. For example, Rothschild and Miethe note
51 that “[m]any said that their own personal values, grounded in their
52 religious or humane traditions, moved them. Of our interviewed re-
53 spondents, 79 percent spoke of the personally held values that drove
54 them to act” (1999, 119). Similarly, Chiu (2003) found that ethical
55 judgment is positively related to whistle-blowing intention among
56 Chinese managers. Yet Miceli, Near, and Dworkin are not convinced:
57
58 Results from the meta-analysis and the qualitative data sug-
59 gest to us that employees believe that they would blow the

whistle in the future or have blown in the past because of
their values and that moral reasoning may predict how people
say they would behave or how others should behave. But
statistical evidence is scant that employees have actually blown
the whistle because of moral reasoning or values. (2008, 59)

Proposition 2. *Putting the security of the group at risk is an impor-
tant reason for the reporter in the public context to report.* Related to a
sense of justice is security of the group, a reason to report that was
cited by all five prison guards interviewed. The integrity violations
reported were unnecessary violence toward inmates, corruption,
smuggling (especially of cell phones and soft drugs), and inappropri-
ate contact with inmates.

“I had to do something with the information ... for our
security that was important ... When a colleague is corrupt,
he endangers my safety too.”

“It is a matter of order and safety. She had a relationship with
an inmate and he can ask her to bring stuff inside the walls.
What if something happened? The lives of guards can depend
on that.”

Thus, even though loyalty to peers and the fear of being called a
“snitch” are important reasons *not* to report (as we will see shortly),
within the violent atmosphere of correctional institutions, where
guards work in small groups and are strongly interdependent, the
most important reason to report is for the group itself. Reporters
can live with themselves after because it can be justified to them-
selves and the group. Should colleagues accuse them of disloyalty to
the group, they can argue that it was precisely their loyalty to their
group that compelled them to act. Once the interests of the group
are at stake, the loyalty conflict can be resolved.

Earlier research has noted that the type of wrongdoing is strongly
correlated with whistle-blowing rates (e.g., Miceli, Near, and
Dworkin 2008, 79–80), but uncertainty exists about which types.
Proposition 2 is about threatening the security of the group, and
earlier studies (e.g., Treviño and Victor 1992; Victor, Treviño, and
Shapiro 1993) corroborate this: when a violation is perceived as
harming the group, the inclination to peer report will be higher.

Proposition 3. *Protecting the wrongdoer is often a reason to peer report
in the public context.* In these cases, the reporter’s information is
likely uncertain, but so harmful to the perceived wrongdoer that
an investigation would allow redemption and thus safety: “We had
to report to protect our colleague. A policeman cannot have these
stories about him on the street, it’s dangerous. It had to be sorted
out. If it wasn’t true, his name could be cleared.”

Scarce literature exists on proposition 3. It has been noted,
however, that considerations of the wrongdoer play a role in the
decision process of the reporter. Miethe (1999), for example,
concludes that when the wrongdoer is considered a (close) friend,
the potential reporter is less likely to report, and if he does so, he
is more likely to report internally. Also related are studies that note
that the greater the trust in organizational justice, the greater the
chance of reporting problems (e.g., Goldman 2001; Treviño and
Weaver 2001).

1	Proposition 4. <i>Self-protection is an important reason to peer report in the public context.</i> Several interview statements supported self-pro-	The perceived reaction of the organization is also important.	60
2	tection as a reason to report.		61
3		"I reported something before. I was afraid they would say,	62
4		"There he goes again."	63
5	"My boss once said, 'if you don't report the violation, you'll be		64
6	punished."	"From the past I knew it was useless to report a corps com-	65
7		mander. I'd get in trouble and they'd do nothing with the	66
8	"All weekend I doubted whether to report. But I saw it and if	report."	67
9	I didn't report, I'd commit an offense myself, even though		68
10	I didn't do anything wrong! I didn't want to be drawn in by	Seeing a colleague report and perceiving the organization's reaction	69
11	him."	as wrong (too severe, nothing at all) is an important reason to forgo	70
12		reporting in the future. This harks back to Organ (1990), who pro-	71
13	"What if my boss had found out in another way? Then he	posed that extrarole behaviors are more likely when employees per-	72
14	would have known that I had known but didn't tell him.	ceive a just organizational environment. Similarly, Victor, Treviño,	73
15	That's against the law."	and Shapiro (1993) conclude that the inclination to report a peer	74
16		for theft in a restaurant is associated with procedural and retributive	75
17	The broader whistle-blowing literature also offers some support. On	justice perceptions (cf. Skarlicki and Folger 1997).	76
18	whistle-blowers in general, Rothschild and Miethe note, "In another		77
19	11 percent of these cases, their motivations would have to be clas-	Much has been written about this proposition in the wider lit-	78
20	sified as chiefly defensive, in the sense that they feared that if they	erature, and much of it is supportive (cf. Mesmer-Magnus and	79
21	did not report and the malfeasance was eventually discovered, that it	Viswesvaran 2005; Maesschalck and Ornelis 2003; Miceli, Near,	80
22	would be blamed on them" (1999, 119).	and Dworkin 2008; Near and Miceli 1996; Vandekerckhove 2006).	81
23		Whistle-blowers fear group retaliation, and rightfully so. According	82
24	Proposition 5. <i>Fear of what will happen to the reporter is an impor-</i>	to Johnson: "The pattern across countless examples, almost without	83
25	<i>tant argument for him or her not to peer report in the public context.</i>	exception, is that the individual whistleblower experiences reprisals"	84
26	The reporters also mentioned several strong reasons <i>not</i> to report.	(2003, 93).	85
27	One reason often mentioned by our interviewees was the fear of	Proposition 6. <i>Fear of what will happen to the wrongdoer is an</i>	86
28	what would happen to their own lives, mainly with respect to	<i>important argument for reporters not to peer report in the public</i>	87
29	how other colleagues would react. "Ratting out" on colleagues is	<i>context.</i> This proposition was surprising in that it is rarely mentioned	88
30	unpopular.	in the literature on whistle-blowing, but is widely supported by our	89
31		interviewees.	90
32	"We're not just talking about my colleagues here, they're		91
33	also my friends. You don't want to be placed out of the	"Once there is an investigation, it could influence his life, not	92
34	group."	just his career, but his life."	93
35			94
36	"A colleague of mine had been in a similar situation. In his		95
37	case the wrongdoer wasn't fired. Because of that, my colleague	"If you report and it turns out he did it, he could get fired."	96
38	felt that the organization had concluded that he was wrong		97
39	and the wrongdoer was right. He didn't dare even look at the	"I thought long and hard about the possible consequences for	98
40	wrongdoer ever again."	the wrongdoer. When you report, you decide about someone's	99
41		job. Maybe about his marriage or life. That is not to be taken	100
42	"Snitches are not tolerated in our organization."	lightly!"	101
43			102
44	"When you report, you have no life anymore in our	"Reporting could mean a loss of income for him."	103
45	organization."		104
46		"He was a colleague and you do think about the consequences	105
47	"Other colleagues don't report because of a strong group	for a colleague."	106
48	feeling. It has to do with collegiality."		107
49		"In general, you want to protect a colleague, that's a loyalty	108
50	"In our group there's a strong sense of never ratting on each	issue."	109
51	other. Older colleagues are especially in favor of that."		110
52		This is also true for possible negative consequences of being a	111
53	Even if the reporter remained anonymous to the group, most	suspect.	112
54	mentioned that they do not like to feel like a "snitch."		113
55		"I didn't want to harm anyone. I asked my boss to be very	114
56	There is also an understandable fear for the consequences when the	careful with him, and to tell as few people as possible. If you	115
57	perceived wrongdoer is the reporter's supervisor: "He's my boss and	take that first step and it turns out that nothing was wrong,	116
58	when he gets only a disciplinary sanction, he'll still be my boss, the	she's still damaged. And if nothing is wrong, she doesn't	117
59	one who judges me. Then I don't have a life anymore!"	deserve that. I don't want to unfairly harm someone. Not	118

1 surprisingly, the closer the reporter is to the wrongdoer, or
 2 the more negative the consequences for the wrongdoer are
 3 perceived, the tougher it is to report.”
 4
 5 “If he had been a close colleague, I would have tried to stop
 6 him privately. Then I would never have told my boss.”
 7
 8 “When you face the person you reported every day, that
 9 makes it tougher.”
 10
 11 The available evidence as well as the person and type of violation
 12 play a role in the decision process. “Before you report something
 13 like that, you want to be sure. Before you destroy someone’s career.
 14 I wasn’t sure at first, and that’s why I didn’t report earlier.” Many
 15 perceivers of integrity violations confirm their suspicions with an
 16 investigation of their own before they report. Widely rumored
 17 wrongdoers are easier to report because the reporter’s likelihood of
 18 being right is higher. If the reporter is the only one with informa-
 19 tion, reliability of the information is more tenuous.

21 **Reasons to Report: A Summary**

22 We have confirmed the hypothesis that peer
 23 reporters find themselves in a situation of
 24 conflicting loyalties. They have to balance
 25 their loyalty to a sense of justice against
 26 their loyalty to the group in general and the
 27 wrongdoer in particular. Reporters often feel
 28 like victims. “I did nothing wrong, yet I was
 29 in this difficult situation I didn’t ask for.”
 30 Therefore, it is notable that only in one case
 31 did the reporter blame the wrongdoer for this.
 32 Reporters are in a confusing situation. They
 33 can be labeled a “snitch,” with all of the negative social consequen-
 34 ces that this implies. But the social constructions of these labels are
 35 themselves confusing. Reporters struggle with identity: sometimes
 36 they feel like heroes and sometimes cowards.

38 **Insights Relevant to a Good Reporting Policy** 39 **Doubts, the Reporter–Wrongdoer Relationship,** 40 **and Anonymous Reporting**

41 About one-third of the interviewees said they had little or no doubt
 42 before reporting.

44 “It was not a tough decision. I find leaking information
 45 wrong. I had to report.”

47 “I had no doubt, not on an earlier report I made either. If
 48 I find that something is wrong, I simply report it.”

50 Clearly, the reasons to report are the same for doubters and non-
 51 doubters: something is wrong and has to be reported. The difference
 52 between them is not surprising: the arguments not to report did
 53 not play a role in the decision process of the nondoubters. The only
 54 reason for peers in this group not to come forward is information
 55 uncertainty.

57 An interesting issue is how and whether animosity plays a role in
 58 peer reporting, as mentioned in the literature on whistle-blowing
 59 (e.g., Near and Miceli 1996), in the sense that the report is intended

to settle a personal score. We conclude that this rarely plays a role.
 Only five of the 25 cases revealed a bad relationship between the
 reporter and the wrongdoer (at least one in each organization). And
 in three of these cases, the relationship was not rancorous: “I didn’t
 like her that much.” There is also evidence that in some cases, the
 reporter did not care what would happen to the wrongdoer. In only
 two cases were there possible signs (in either the interviews or the
 files) of rancor, but it seemed to have played an insignificant role.

The reasons to report differ only slightly with the reporter–wrong-
 doer relationship. In the case of a bad relationship, however, report-
 ing is easier. The reporter has fewer doubts about reporting and
 penalties for the wrongdoer are not a consideration.

“I hardly knew him. When you know someone longer, taking
 the step to report is much harder.”

“I did not doubt: the step was easy because you don’t do what
 he did. It wasn’t a colleague who was popular in our group.
 She was an outsider.”

We have confirmed the
 hypothesis that peer reporters
 find themselves in a situation
 of conflicting loyalties. They
 have to balance their loyalty to
 a sense of justice against their
 loyalty to the group in general
 and the wrongdoer in particular.

“I never worried about what would hap-
 pen with her. I didn’t like her. She didn’t
 belong there: a professional can’t mistreat
 minors. These little boys were defenseless.
 That’s wrong, period. That’s not even up
 for discussion.”

It was often expressed that if the relationship
 had been good, taking the initiative would
 have been harder:

“When you like someone, it’s hard to report on him.”

“In general, you weigh the consequences for the person you
 report on, in this case not because I didn’t like him, but in
 general it’s your moral duty; he could lose his job! In good
 relationships, it is more common to first address the perceived
 wrongdoer.”

“It makes a difference if you know someone well or not. In
 that case, you can directly ask the person about it. But if you
 barely know him, you report.”

All respondents were explicitly asked whether they had considered
 reporting anonymously. Only one of the 25 had done so, but,
 “I would never do that again.” And the rest agreed: anonymous
 reporting is not a good option, for two reasons: (1) in most cases,
 it is clear to everyone who reported anyway, and (2) it feels
 “unfair.”

“Anonymous reporting is cowardly in my eyes.”

“Those kinds of things should be done openly and honestly.”

The use of the words “openly” and “honestly” is interesting. With
 these strong feelings, a reporter turns away from being “sneaky,”
 “untrustworthy,” or “cowardly.” Being labeled a betrayer, tattler,
 snitch, informer or traitor (Åkerstrom 1991, 67) is bad enough; it

1 is worse to feel like one, and anonymous reporting can accomplish
2 just that.⁴ While it is possible that reporters differ in this respect
3 from silent observers, it is unlikely. As mentioned, anonymous
4 reports were rare in all organizations, despite the opportunity.
5 The drawbacks to anonymity are supported in the recent whistle-
6 blower literature review by Miceli, Near, and Dworkin
7 (2008, 158).

9 *The Reporter's Fate and the Role of the Bureaus*

10 The feelings of the reporter after making the report differed sharply.
11 Some who had doubted for a long time about reporting had a sense
12 of relief. "I did good. It gives a clean feeling." But most had mixed
13 feelings.

15 "I rang the bell, but did I do the right thing? I lay awake for
16 many nights."

18 "After making the report I felt bad. I snitched on someone.
19 He will lose his job. And he already had financial problems."

21 Furthermore, the impact of making the report is often larger than
22 feared. "I never thought that telling something to my boss over a
23 cup of coffee would have such an impact. I had regrets: what had
24 I done? I didn't sleep for weeks. There was much turmoil in our
25 organization because of what I said."

27 As hypothesized from the whistle-blowing literature, there were
28 strong repercussions in those cases in which colleagues knew who
29 made the report.

31 "I was ignored by several groups of colleagues. They called me
32 a snitch and accused me of betrayal. I had to defend myself
33 for weeks, even though someone else did something wrong."

35 "I can't handle it anymore. I'm looking for a new job."

37 This last case is an exception. Even though the repercussions are
38 tougher than expected, most reporters function (reasonably) nor-
39 mally in the long run. Yet, as Heard and Miller (2006) stress, reports
40 of retaliation should be taken seriously and followed up on.

42 As mentioned, group processes are important, and so is collegial re-
43 action to reporters. "How your colleagues react is important. It plays
44 a big role. You're afraid people will get an image of you that you
45 don't like." In some cases, the colleagues did not know who reported.
46 The reactions of those who did know differed strongly. Sometimes
47 the reporter was ignored and blamed. Others sided with the reporter.

49 "I told two colleagues. They agreed with me. That was an
50 important confirmation. I didn't want to be a snitch."

52 "I got positive reactions from my colleagues like, 'how brave
53 of you. I wouldn't have dared.'"

55 When the whole organization knew who reported, the reporter ap-
56 preciated being able to explain the report to the group and having
57 leadership on her side. "My boss said in a meeting how happy he
58 was with me, how everyone should be. I hardly got any criticism
59 from my group."

Compliments from the bureaus were exceptional. Almost all reporters
complained about how the organizations dealt with the reporter after
the report. Two complaints surfaced: the reporters were not told what
happened after their report, and they were not thanked in any way.
"The wrongdoer was fired, but I never heard that from the bureau."

Some form of appreciation turns out to be valuable to reporters.
This cannot be overly stressed. They are not looking for monetary
rewards (they would feel even more like a Judas), but some sort of
confirmation that they did the right thing, a reaffirmation of their
value. In their confusing process of identity reconstruction, they
need positive support. They made clear that after the reports, doubts
linger; they were still confused and trying to make sense of the
situation. Being reassured is important, especially from leadership.
Instead, most reporters had the feeling that the bureaus and leaders
thought what they did was routine. The reporters had no sympathy
for the emotionally tough situation they had been in.

"They never said, 'Well done!'"

"I didn't need a pat on the back, but 'Thank you for reporting'
would have been nice. I would have known that I was doing
what I was supposed to."

The few expressions of appreciation were gratefully received. "I got
a thumbs-up from the bureau. That's good, it's important to know
that there are people behind you."

It is also important to peer reporters that the report be taken seri-
ously and that some feedback is given, even if the decision is for no
further action. Heard and Miller (2006) stress this. The reporter
needs to trust that the matter will not wind up in someone's desk
drawer. "Nothing happened, and I heard nothing about it, ever." Yet
the other side of the coin is that the reporter also needs to trust that
the organization will not overreact, that the wrongdoer will get fair
treatment.

Discussion and Implications for Public Management

Only 9 percent of integrity violation cases in public organizations
were started by peer reporting. Although this could be a reason to
reevaluate internal reporting systems, a strong case can be made to
remain sharp in routine supervision because we now know that ap-
proximately one-third of cases originate with institutional functions
of control and investigation (table 3). Nor should the organization
overreact. Distrust breeds distrust, as Luhmann (1979) notes. Be-
cause total eradication of integrity violations is impossible, remain-
ing vigilant in routine controls is recommended.

The most important reason to report suspicion of a colleague's
integrity violation is a sense of justice. The reporter considers the
situation wrong and feels that something should be done. Other
important aspects are the security of the group or organization, the
seriousness of the violation, and protection of the wrongdoer. The
most important argument for reporters not to report is, as we might
expect, the negative consequences for the reporter. A surprising
reason not to report is the negative consequences for the wrong-
doer: the reporter feels responsible for the wrongdoer's punishment.
Other considerations include the perceived reaction of the organiza-
tion and the reporter's quality of evidence. In general, peer reports

are not rancorous. Anonymous reporting is rare because it makes the reporter feel sneaky or untrustworthy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, we offer the following general recommendations for public organizations:

- Promote an open culture in which doubts and insecurities about integrity can be discussed, one in which employees who overstep the mark are addressed by their colleagues and serious integrity violations are reported. After studying government guerrillas, O'Leary offers similar advice: "Create an organization culture that accepts, welcomes, and encourages candid dialogue and debate" (2006, 109). Avoid damaging the social fabric of trust and cooperation. Urging employees to report every wrong detail of a coworker could create what Case (1987) refers to as a "suspicion awareness context." Peer reporting should not undermine the stability and trust within groups (King and Hermodson 2000).
- Design a reporting protocol and discuss it with supervisors. Find out which integrity violations are most common in the organization and which are most serious. Communicate within the organization what actions will not be tolerated and the importance of public administrators reporting serious violations. Some examples from Victor, Treviño, and Shapiro: "Management may prescribe responsibility for peer reporting in codes of conduct and/or job descriptions, redefining peer reporting as an in-role rather than an extra-role behavior. Management may also highlight ways in which a co-worker's misconduct harms other workgroup members" (1993, 261–62). The last suggestions resonate well with the findings of this study on the importance to peer reporters of integrity violations that harm the (the security of the) group.
- Design a reporting procedure in which the report is taken seriously and without organizational overreaction. Decide what is considered fair punishment for specific violations.
- Give the reporter attention and offer guidance. Tailor it to the particular situation. Discuss with the reporter the guidance that would best help. Try to find out for which group processes a reporter fears. Confirm that the reporter did the right thing and express appreciation. Most importantly, let the reporter know what steps were taken.
- The most logical person a peer reports to is someone who is trusted. In most cases, this is the supervisor. An alternate superior should be available in the case of a bad employee-supervisor relationship. A central reporting place in the organization would take care of other contingencies. As a last resort (these cases should be very rare), give opportunity to report anonymously; in some cases, it is necessary to protect the reporter. This should not be encouraged, however, and anonymity should not extend so far as to preclude communication with the reporter for purposes of investigation. Having different options is similar to O'Leary's advice: "Create multiple channels for dissent" (2006, 114).

Two-thirds of our interviewees had serious or very serious doubts before reporting. A conflict of loyalty renders no choice right. Public organizations ought to consider, then, how potential reporters can be helped and supported through this tough process and loyalty

Promote an open culture in which doubts and insecurities about integrity can be discussed, one in which employees who overstep the mark are addressed by their colleagues and serious integrity violations are reported.

conflict. If many of our interviewees had serious doubts about reporting, imagine the number of integrity and/or law violations that remain hidden because the decisions of potential reporters fell to the side of "silent observer."

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Notes

1. This typology was the outcome of an analysis of the literature on police integrity and corruption and was assessed against the results of empirical research on internal investigations in the police force. It was important in developing the typology that it included the following:
 - All types of relevant behavior: behavior within the organization, interaction with external actors (citizens), and private time behavior as far as was relevant to the organization
 - All types of relevant moral norms and values: in laws and rules, in internal codes and procedures, and in the unwritten, informal norms and values
 - Behavior contrary to the organization's interest, favoring the organization, but harming relevant social norms and values
2. For interesting exceptions, see Rothschild and Miethe (1999), King and Hermodson (2000), and Pershing (2003).
3. The full name is the Police Department of Amsterdam-Amstelland.
4. In some cases, it was a good option to ask the bureau to keep their identity secret to their colleagues (confidentiality), but that is another issue.

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